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Recategorized as /s/ Warren A. Henderson

## Dogr Bras

In your letter to me of October 8, you indicated that the FT 1961 Air Force budget involves substantial reductions in U.S. HATO-committed agreedrons during 1960. We understand that this may mean elimination of 14 out of 48 U.S. HATO-committed squadrons. Such U.S. action, when combined with other factors adversely affecting the KATO Allianse at this time, can well provoke a general deterioration in the Western defense posture.

I am very seriously concerned about the effects of this on our position in forthcoming negotiations with the Soviets on distrument and Barlin. It seems to me most undesirable for us to initiate any moves towards unilateral reduction of allied forces just prior to the opening of negotiations with the Soviets. We would, in effect, be discarding a major factor in our bargaining positions. I intend to discuss this matter fully with the President and enclose a copy of a brief memorandum which I am sending him.

Best, as ever,

Christian A. Hertor

## Enclosure:

Copy of memorendum for the President

Clearances:

RA - LMr. Tuthill ( Mr. Magill

EUR - Mr. White K 9%

S/S -

The Honorable

Thomas S. Gates, Jr.,

Acting Secretary of Defense.

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Sabject: Ef

Effect on Meanwaget and Berlin Negatiations of Essection of U.S. Forces Committed to HATO

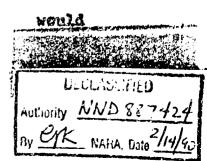
I understand that the proposed II 1981 Air Force budget involves the withdrawal during 1960 of 14 of the 48 U.S. Air Force squadrons currently committed to HATO. This major cutback in U.S. forces committed to HATO, if approved, would have to be made known to our HATO allies promptly.

I understand that this plan reflects the view that limited Air Porce budgetary resources should be devoted to the ICHN program and that the tactical strike forces must be correspondingly reduced. Thus it reflects not only budgetary considerations, but also sajor policy considerations.

Such U.S. reductions would have a major adverse impact on MATO. Our Allies will link those reductions with the prospective heavy cuts in the military aid program for MATO and assume that there is in process a major shift in U.S. policy toward a drastic revision of our commitments to Europe and reliance on a "Fortress incrica" concept. This belief, coupled with the current tendency in some circles to believe there is a real "detente" justifying a relaxation of the Western defense posture, sould well produce a chain reaction deterioration in the whole MATO defense posture.

I believe that the most important and over-riding factor in this is the potential effect on the Esviets in the disarmament negotiations. If we, and the N4TO alliance generally, engage in "unilateral" disarmament before or during the new round of disarmament negotiations, we will almost certainly prejudice any chance we may have of success. Disantling of western defense is bound to be interpreted by the Soviets as a sign of westers, not as willingsons to reach an agreement. We

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would in effect be giving away our bargaining position in advance. Any necessary reductions in our forces should be made, in my view, only after and possibly as a part of a disarrament agreement with the Soviets, not prior to the negotiations.

I also believe our position will likewise be seriously compromised in any negotiations of a Berlin settlement if we were to take unilatoral steps now towards cutting back our strength in Europe.

In addition to these two basic considerations, I should also point out that there are at present various atrains on the NATC Alliance which would certainly become much more acute if there were to be major withdrawals of U.S. units. De Gaulle's nationalistic attitudes, British efforts to change basic NATO strategy, and potential shortfalls in meeting minimum force requirements can result in a feeling of general discouragement about the effectiveness of NATO defenses and increase any latent tendency to reach an accommodation with the Leviets which would be inimical to our interests.

Christian A. Herter

Clearances:

RA - Mr. Tuthill R7
Mr. Magill FR7
EUR - Mr. White Thy
s/s -

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